



**The State of Mississippi**  
Phil Bryant, Governor  
**Jess H. Dickinson, Commissioner**  
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TO: Public Catalyst

FROM: Kris Jones, Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Human Resources

THROUGH: Megan Bennett, *Olivia Y.* Settlement Coordinator

SUBJECT: Provision 1.2.a and 1.2.b of the Second Modified Settlement Agreement

DATE: December 15, 2017

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MDCPS submits the following documentation in addition to the submission produced on December 1, 2017 regarding Provisions 1.2.a-b. of the 2nd Modified Settlement Agreement:

1. Professional Development Plan for calendar year 2018, completed December 11, 2017.





## **Professional Development Plan**

The Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services, Office of Professional Development (OPD) is a part of the Administration and Human Resources arm of the Agency. The OPD administers a training and professional development program designed to prepare MDCPS employees to assume their job responsibilities and enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities through ongoing training opportunities. MDCPS has made a commitment to developing its staff by providing training, continuing education workshops, coaching, mentoring and other learning opportunities to challenge and motivate them to perform their job responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

At the core of professional development is the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. The focus of the Practice Model revolves around the family. At its most fundamental level, the Practice Model addresses assurance of child safety and managing the risk of harm. The activities that comprise the other components of the Practice Model are designed to protect the child and support the capacity of families to care for their children safely and appropriately, while also meeting the needs for permanency, stability, and well-being. It is critical to the mission of the Agency to simultaneously emphasize and support all components of the Practice Model.

While each of the Practice Model components includes unique skills and activities that require particular systemic supports to function, they are also highly interrelated. All components should be implemented in an integrated manner to be effective in improving outcomes for children and families. The components of the Practice Model are more than ideals and concepts. They comprise specific activities, roles, and responsibilities that will affect the work of caseworkers, supervisors, Regional Directors, service providers, resource parents, and State Office staff.

OPD has Training Coordinator positions in each region who support the field through on-the-job training. The Agency also has Practice Coaches who work hands on to instill and operationalize all components of the Practice Model throughout all regions of the state. Discussions regarding how to continue to mold these positions to enhance the professional development of the workforce are continuing.



## PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Pre-Service Training is a critical foundation for the Agency's employees. All newly hired frontline and supervisory staff are required to attend 270 hours of Pre-Service Training prior to obtaining a caseload.

Pre-Service training is currently delivered in a model that is a combination of on-the-job training (OJT) and classroom instruction. OPD is in the revision process of adding several online learning components to the existing classroom-based curriculum. The matriculation of training flows starting with Week 1 of OJT followed by a week of classroom training. This cycle continues for a total of four weeks of OJT and 4 weeks of classroom training and culminates at the end of the period with MACWIS training. Currently, OPD is working to integrate MACWIS training into the classroom training to give newly hired staff the opportunity to become more familiar with the system before training completion.

During the OJT weeks, staff are partnered with a more experienced caseworker as well as their supervisor and a Training Coordinator. This team works to ensure the experiences assigned in the OJT material are completed and shadowing opportunities are in place. We believe this combination of learning strategies gives a new hire the opportunity to see the casework being done while they are in a protected learning environment. Training staff and field supervisors share the major responsibility for this task. Training new hires is a partnership with the front-line supervisor, the new hire, a more experienced caseworker and the OJT Training Coordinator. Frequent communications during this time among the new hire, the trainer and the supervisor will promote the best learning experience possible.

Each week of classroom training concludes with a competency-based exam that must be passed with a score of 70% or higher. If the new hire is unable to pass the test on the first attempt, he or she can retest. Failure to pass the test on the second attempt is grounds for separation from the Agency.

The topics covered in each week of training are as follows:

- Week 1 OJT
  - Building the Worker's Support Systems
    - This includes, but is not limited to, learning the Agency's overall structure, mission, employee's roles, and duties as well as orientation to basic programs, community resources, professional and ethical behavior, worker and office safety. In this week, the new hire begins the case observation process.





- Week 1 Classroom
  - What is the Job of the Child Welfare Professional? Engagement of Clients in Assuring Safety, Permanency and Well-Being; Intake and Investigation
- Week 2 OJT
  - Building the Worker's Support Systems
    - Development of a community resource files, orientation to family centered practice, core conditions of the helping relationship, being culturally competent; interviewing skills and assessment are integrated into this week of OJT. Observation of initial assessment/investigation; completing a safety assessment; observation of a family team meeting. A home visit with a training buddy are also integrated during this week.
- Week 2 Classroom
  - The Assessment Process – Safety, Risk, Individuals and Family.
- Week 3 OJT
  - Building the Worker's Support Systems
    - Orientation to family engagement; documentation; case planning/management and court processes; observation of parent/caseworker engagement; child/caseworker engagement; resource parent/caseworker engagement; a home visit with a more experienced case worker; attendance at a shelter hearing and adjudication/disposition hearing.
- Week 3 Classroom
  - The Case Planning Process
- Week 4 OJT
  - Building the Worker's Support Systems, continued
    - Orientation to engaging fathers, meeting the needs of children in care, foster care review; time management; supervision; observation of service provider and worker engagement; resource home evaluation; shadowing visit in the home; independent living; attend a review and permanency hearing and after hours call.
- Week 4 Classroom
  - Out of home placement; preserving and maintaining connections; mobilizing appropriate services timely; court; permanency, safety and well-being of children
- MACWIS Training



## CLINICAL SUPERVISORY TRAINING AND MENTORING

For newly hired or promoted casework supervisors, OPD provides Clinical Supervisory Training (CST) within 90 days of hire or promotion prior to obtaining a supervision caseload. CST is a 40-hour classroom training directed specifically at preparing the newly hired or promoted supervisor of child welfare caseworkers for supervision prior to assuming any supervisory responsibilities. It is based on identified competencies that culminate in competency-based testing which must be passed with a 70% for training to be credited.

The curriculum focuses on supervision of the actions, responses, and decisions of the caseworker in providing services to clients and includes training the supervisor to guide, teach, assess, motivate, and facilitate the worker to do the following:

- Engage the client;
- Development of rapport or a helping relationship between the caseworker and the client;
- Develop risk and safety assessments and the associated decisions and plans;
- Complete Comprehensive Child and Family Assessments;
- Develop a Case Plan with the Family;
- Practice effective decision-making related to casework and essential casework activities designed to facilitate change;
- Develop measurable outcomes to review and evaluate client progress; and;
- Assess own self-care, response to working with victims of trauma and self-evaluation of own work and areas of strength and weakness.

The CST curriculum includes training for skill building in group activities to facilitate effective case consultation, build self-awareness, focus on content of cases and issues presented by individual caseworkers, and create a safe and accepting atmosphere so that caseworkers will meaningfully participate in group processes. Training also includes methods and models for providing supervision and building self-awareness of caseworkers by review, evaluation, feedback, guidance, direction and coaching.

Following completion of CST, when a newly hired or promoted supervisor begins to carry a supervisory caseload, an experienced mentor is assigned to the supervisor. The mentor will meet with the supervisor once a week for 12 weeks. This part of the training is designed so that an experienced supervisor and new supervisor work together. It is divided into 12 modules and occurs following CST and after the new supervisor assumes a supervisory caseload.





A topic list is included, but the mentor and new supervisor may develop the course of discussion according to what issues the new supervisor is struggling with or by determining specific needs of the individual new supervisor. The mentor will monitor case staffing and will hold staff evaluation sessions to offer feedback to the new supervisor.

Level One is the beginning of professional development of the child welfare supervisor and is designed to instill a commitment and desire for lifelong learning and improvement in child welfare supervisory skills. Each module builds upon a professional development plan of action for the supervisor. The Level 1 curriculum includes the following topics each week:

- Week One - Identification of Supervisory Strengths; Transition from Worker to Supervisor
- Week Two - Four Areas of Supervision
- Week Three - Crisis Management and Secondary Traumatic Stress in Workers
- Week Four - Contracting with Unit by Tuning In, Contracting Skills
- Week Five - Case Reviews & Case Staffing, Knowing the Cases and Policy; Leading Effective Meetings
- Week Six - Team Development; Creating structure and Systems in the Unit; Assessing Team Functioning; Overcoming Problems; Managing Conflict
- Week Seven - Planning & Time Management; Interruption Awareness; Management of Self; Helping Workers to Manage their Time
- Week Eight - Parallel Processes; Modeling Empathy; Helping Others to Make Decisions
- Week Nine - Principles of Adult Learning
- Week Ten - Professional Development of Workers; Staff Retention
- Week Eleven - Dual Relationships
- Week Twelve - Resource Development; Stakeholder Relationships

## ONGOING TRAINING

Beginning January 2018, all frontline staff will be required to receive 20 hours of ongoing training and supervisory staff will be required to receive 12 hours annually. The ongoing training program is currently delivered entirely in a classroom, face-to-face training modality but due to the deployment of tablets to field staff and supervisors, we now have the ability to deliver online training. OPD is currently in the implementation phase of a new Learning Management System to track all training delivered by us and our contractors. In addition, this system will be a vehicle to deliver online training. Currently, each quarterly communication with the Professional Development team and



Field Operations identifies the course offerings selected for delivery to each region. For example, over the course of the 2017 calendar year OPD has delivered the following courses statewide:

- January - March - Court: "Can I Get a Witness?", TPR Training and
- April - Teachable Moments and "Safety and Risk Triage in Investigations"
- May - Childhood Trauma; What Do You Know About That?
- June - Resource/Rehoming - "Lasting Permanency: Preventing Maltreatment, Disruption and Dissolution"
- June - "Substance Abuse in the Family"
- August - Quality Visits and Preserving and Maintaining Connections
- September/ October - Self Care: Filling Your Buckets!
- October - Mental Health: "Childhood/Adolescent Mental Health Issues and the Child Welfare Professional"
- November/December - Human Trafficking: "Secret Slavery - A Child Welfare Response to Human Trafficking"
- Adoption Competency
- Child Welfare 501
- Licensure Competency
- 7 Practice Model Learning Cycles have been delivered in 7 regions

## UPCOMING ENHANCEMENTS

Currently, OPD is revising the training selection process as well as shifting the training year dates. Beginning in January 2018, the training year will be a calendar year instead of the state fiscal year.

We are also working to develop position-specific outlines for training that will be much more directive than in the previous years. The goal of these outlines is to provide a roadmap for staff to build their skills as caseworkers and supervisors over the course of their careers with MDCPS.